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K. Locke (John) the Philosopher

A DEFENCE OF MR. LOCKE's OPINION CONCERNING *PERSONAL IDENTITY*;

by Dr Law.

IN ANSWER TO THE FIRST PART OF A LATE ESSAY ON THAT SUBJECT.

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M,DCC,LXIX.

A DEFENCE OF Mr. LOCKE's OPINION, &c.

THE candid Author of a late Eſſay upon perſonal identity cannot juſtly be offended with any attempt to explain and vindicate Mr. *Locke*'s hypotheſis, if it is carried on in the ſame ſpirit, though it ſhould be attended with the overthrow of ſome of his own favourite notions; ſince he owns that it is of conſequence to form right opinions on this point: which was indeed once deemed an important one, how little ſoever ſuch may be regarded now-a-days. I ſhall proceed therefore, without farther apology, to ſettle the terms of this queſtion, and endeavour to ſtate it ſo as to bring matters to a ſhort and clear determination.

Now the word *Perſon*, as is well obſerved by Mr. *Locke* (the diſtinguiſhing ex-

cellence of whoſe writings conſiſts in ſticking cloſe to the point in hand, and ſtriking out all foreign and impertinent conſiderations) is properly a *forenſick* term, and here to be uſed in the ſtrict forenſick ſenſe, denoting ſome ſuch quality or modification in man as denominates him a moral agent, or an *accountable* creature; renders him the proper ſubject of *Laws*, and a true object of Rewards or Puniſhments. When we apply it to any man, we do not treat of him abſolutely, and in groſs; but under a particular relation or preciſion; we do not comprehend or concern ourſelves about the ſeveral inherent properties which accompany him in real exiſtence, which go to the making up the whole complex notion of an active and intelligent Being; but arbitrarily abſtract one ſingle quality or mode from all the reſt, and view him under that diſtinct preciſion only which points out the idea abovementioned, excluſive of every other idea that may belong to him in any other view, either as ſubſtance, quality, or mode. And therefore the conſideration of this ſame

quality

quality or qualification will not be altered by any others of which he may be poſſeſſed; but remains the ſame whatever he ſhall conſiſt of beſides: whether his ſoul be a material or immaterial ſubſtance, or no ſubſtance at all, as may appear from examining the import of theſe *pronouns*, *I*, *thou*, *he*, &c. [the grammatical meaning of ſuch words generally pointing out the true origin of our ideas primarily annexed to them] which both in their original ſenſe and common acceptation are purely *perſonal* terms, and as ſuch lead to no farther conſideration either of ſoul or body; nay, ſometimes are diſtinguiſhed from both, as in the following lines,

Linquebant dulces animas, aut ægra trahebant
Corpora. *

An enquiry after the *identity* of ſuch perſon will be, whether at different times he is, or how he can be, and know himſelf to be the ſame in that reſpect, or equally ſubjected to the very ſame relations and conſequent obligations

* See *Locke* on 1 *Cor.* xv. 53.

ligations which he was under formerly, and in which he ſtill perceives himſelf to be involved whenever he reflects upon himſelf and them. This we ſhall find to conſiſt in nothing more, than his becoming ſenſible at different times of what he had thought or done before; and being as fully convinced that *he* then thought or did it, as he now is of his preſent thoughts, acts, or exiſtence.

Beyond this we neither can, nor need go for evidence in any thing; this, we ſhall ſoon ſee, is the clear and only medium through which diſtant things can be diſcovered and compared together; which at the ſame time ſufficiently aſcertains and eſtabliſhes their ſeveral natures and realities reſpectively; ſo far as they relate to ourſelves and to each other: or if this ſhould not be eſteemed ſufficient to that end, we ſhall find, in the laſt place, that there is nothing elſe left for it. This diſtinct conſciouſneſs of our paſt actions, from whence ariſe all the ideas of merit and demerit, will moſt undoubtedly be regarded with the greateſt exactneſs in *foro divino*; and indeed has

its due weight in *foro humano*, whenever it can be with certainty determined: wherever this appears to be wanting, all judicial proceedings are at an end. How plain ſoever any criminal act were, the man would now-a-days be acquitted from guilt in the commiſſion of it, and diſcharged from the penalties annexed to ſuch fact, could it at the ſame time be as plainly made out, that he was incapable of knowing what he did, or is now under a like incapacity of recollecting it. And it would be held a ſufficient reaſon for ſuch acquittal, that the puniſhment or perſecution of a creature in theſe circumſtances could not anſwer the end propoſed by ſociety in puniſhment, viz. the prevention of evil, the only end that I know of, which can juſtify puniſhments in any caſe. The reaſon then why ſuch a plea has uſually ſo ſmall regard paid to it in courts of juſtice, is, I apprehend, either the difficulty of having this incapacity proved with the ſame clearneſs that the fact itſelf is eſtabliſhed; or the common maxim that one crime, or criminal indiſpoſition, is not admiſſible

miſſible in excuſe for another; as in caſes of drunkenneſs, violent paſſion, killing or maiming men by miſtake when one is engaged in an unlawful purſuit, &c. Or in ſome of theſe caſes perhaps men are not puniſhed for the murders, &c. becauſe they poſſibly *may* be conſcious of them, and yet that conſciouſneſs not appear; but that ſuch evils may be more effectually prevented by ſtriking at the remoter cauſe, *i. e.* exciting a ſalutary terror of thoſe confeſſedly evil practices and habits, which are often found to terminate in ſuch fatal effects. A kind of injuſtice is here indeed commited by ſociety, which we have no reaſon to ſuppoſe will be admitted in *foro divino*, and ſome worſe inſtances may be ſeen in our ſtatute books. By the 23 of HEN. 8. a man becoming lunatick after an act of treaſon ſhall be liable to be arrainged, tried, and executed. But *Hales** in his P C. C. ſays, That if a traitor becomes *non compos* before conviction he ſhall not be arraigned; if after conviction, he ſhall not be executed: and

* *Hale* P. C. 10.

and *Hawkins* † obſerves the ſame concerning thoſe who have committed any capital offences.

In human courts, which cannot always dive into the hearts of men and diſcover the true ſprings of action, nor conſequently weigh the effects and operations of each in an equal balance; in this ſtate of ignorance and uncertainty, ſuch a notorious indiſpoſition as that of drunkenneſs, *v. g.* being generally a great fault in itſelf, is ſeldom allowed in extenuation of ſuch others as are committed under its influence; nor indeed does it, I believe, often produce any new, materially different trains of thinking, or totally obliterate the old ones; but where this is really ſo, the Deity would make juſt abatement for ſuch defect or diſability, as was at the time both unconquerable and unavoidable; nor can we properly impute actions conſequent upon any real diſorder of the rational faculties, howſoever that might have been contracted; and therefore all animadverſions upon them muſt be in vain:

† *Hawk.* P C. C.

vain: nor is a man puniſhable for any thing beſide the bare act of contracting ſuch diſorder, or for the original cauſe of this diſability, how great or durable ſoever; the dangerous conſequences of which he did, or might foreſee. As is the caſe in ſome other confirmed habits, viz. that of ſwearing, &c. which often operate mechanically and unperceived, and in which therefore all the moral turpitude (or what is ſo accounted) ariſing from them, never can reach beyond the fountain head from whence they are derived, and from which all the effects of them naturally, and even neceſſarily flow. We muſt therefore conclude in general, that a perſon's guilt is eſtimated according to his paſt and preſent conſciouſneſs of the offence, and of his having been the author of it. Nor is it merely his having *forgotten* * the thing, but his having ſo far loſt the notion of it out of his mind, that how frequently ſoever or in what forcible manner ſoever it may be preſented to him again, he lies under an utter incapacity

* Eſſay, page 23.

city of becoming ſenſible and ſatisfied that he was ever privy to it before, which is affirmed to render this thing really none of his, or wholly exculpate him when called to anſwer for it. Suppoſe this ſame conſciouſneſs to return, his *accountableneſs* (call it perſonality, or what you pleaſe) will return along with it: that is, the infliction of evil upon him will now anſwer ſome purpoſe, and therefore they will conſider him as now liable to it. Thus ſome wholly loſe the uſe of their intellectual faculties for a time, and recover them at intervals. In ſuch caſes they are conſidered as puniſhable by laws, and ſo declared by juries, in proportion to the probability of their being conſcious of the fact. Others lie under a partial deprivation of ſome one faculty for certain periods, while they continue to enjoy the reſt in tolerable perfection. I knew a learned man, who was ſaid to recollect with eaſe ſubjects upon which he had written, or any others that had been diſcuſſed before the laſt ten or fifteen years; could reaſon freely, and readily turn to the Authors he had

had read upon them; but take him into the latter part of his life, and all was blank; when any late incidents were repeated to him, he would only ſtare at you, nor could he be made ſenſible of any one modern occurrence however ſtrongly repreſented to him. Was this man equally anſwerable for all tranſactions within the laſt period of his life, as for thoſe in the firſt? Or if he could have been made ſenſible of the latter part, but had irrecoverably loſt the former; could that former part have been in like manner imputed to him? Surely not. And the reaſon plainly is, becauſe ſociety could find no advantage from conſidering him as accountable in either caſe. Which ſhews perſonality to be ſolely a creature of ſociety, an abſtract conſideration of man, neceſſary for the mutual benefit of him and his fellows; *i. e.* a mere forenſick term; and to enquire after its criterion or conſtituent, is to enquire in what circumſtances ſocieties or civil combinations of men have in *fact* agreed to inflict evil upon individuals, in order to prevent evils to the whole body from any irregular

regular member. Daily experience ſhews, that they always make conſciouſneſs of the fact a neceſſary requiſite in ſuch puniſhment, and that all enquiry relates to the probability of ſuch conſciouſneſs. The execution of *Divine* Juſtice muſt proceed in the ſame manner. The Deity inflicts evil with a ſettled view to ſome end; and no end worthy of him can be anſwered by inflicting it as a puniſhment, unleſs to prevent other evils. Such end may be anſwered, if the patient is conſcious, or can be made conſcious of the fact, but not otherwiſe. And whence then does this difference in any one's moral capacity ariſe, but from that plain diverſity in his natural one? from his abſolute irretrievable want of conſciouſneſs in one caſe, and not in the other. Suppoſe now that one in the former condition kills a man; that he, or ſome part of what we call *him*, was never ſo notoriouſly the inſtrument or occaſion of that death; yet if he was either then inſenſible of the fact, or afterwards became ſo, and ſo continued: Would he be any more guilty of murder,

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than if that death had been occaſioned by another perſon? ſince at that time he was truly ſuch, or at leaſt is ſo now, notwithſtanding that moſt people might be apt to judge him ſtill the ſame, from a ſameneſs in outward circumſtances, (which generally ſupply the beſt means men have of judging) from his ſhape, mien, or appearance; tho' theſe often differ widely from the internal conſtitution, yet are as often miſtaken for it; and this accordingly thought and ſpoke of with little more philoſophical propriety, than when we, in the vulgar phraſe, deſcribe a man's condition by ſaying, We would not be in his *coat*.

Suppoſe one then in the ſituation abovementioned; could any pains, think you, inflicted on him ſuit the idea, or anſwer the ends of puniſhment, either with regard to himſelf or others, farther than mere ſhew and deluſion? Rewards and Puniſhments are evidently inſtituted for the benefit of ſociety, for the encouragement of virtue or ſuppreſſion of vice in the object thus rewarded or puniſhed, and in the reſt

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of the community; but what tendency to the above purpoſes can either of theſe have, if diſpenſed to one who is *not* ſo far *himſelf* as to become conſcious of having done any thing to deſerve it? What inſtruction is conveyed to him? What admonition to ſuch others, as are duly acquainted with the whole of the caſe, and ſee every circumſtance thus groſsly miſapplied? And as in theſe caſes, laws only can define the circumſtances in which a man ſhall be treated as accountable, they only can create guilt, *i. e.* guilt alſo is a forenſick term, or a mode of conſidering any action, which in its eſſence implies knowledge of a law, offence againſt that law, and a ſenſe of having offended againſt it; *i. e.* an after conſciouſneſs of the fact; without which after conſciouſneſs, puniſhment would be of little avail, as it would neither ſerve to guard the man himſelf againſt a like delinquency, nor tend to the warning of others, who by ſuch inflictions would only perceive that they might chance to ſuffer pain, without being able to aſſign a reaſon for it. — Thus may per-

perſonality be extended or contracted, and vary in various reſpects, times, and degrees, and thereby become liable to great confuſion in our applying it to various ſubjects; yet is the ground and foundation of it fixed; and when once diſcovered, its conſequences are no leſs ſo, both before God and man.

Abſtract, general ideas (of which this is an eminent one) are alone productive of certain, uniform, and univerſal knowledge: Thus qualities of a certain kind, when *abſtracted*, or taken apart from nature, and ſet up for common ſtandards, are ſo far independent as to become abſolute, unmixed, or perfect in themſelves,* however different they may be found in their reſpective *concretes*. Thus Goodneſs, Juſtice, Guilt, Merit, &c. in general are ever the ſame *Goodneſs*, &c. all the world over, however imperfectly they may appear in any particular ſubjects, times, and places. In the ſame manner as a line, or the abſtract conſideration of length without thickneſs or breadth; the con-

* Note 10. to *King*'s Origin of Evil. Rem. k.

conſideration of ſurface, *i. e.* length and breadth without thickneſs, muſt be the ſame in all intelligent beings of like faculties with us, tho' the natural ſubſtances which ſuggeſt them may differ with an endleſs variety. Let perſonality anſwer to a line or ſurface; let the ſubſtances it is predicated of, like the infinite variety of ſolids in nature, (with their appendages, heat, cold, colour, &c.) in which length and breadth are found, vary as you pleaſe, ſtill the abſtract ideas of line and ſurface, and therefore of perſon, will remain invariable. And thus propoſitions formed out of theſe general ideas contain certain truths, that are in one ſenſe eternal and immutable, as depending on no precarious exiſtences whatever. Being merely what we ourſelves make them, they muſt continue the ſame while the ſame number of ſuch ideas continue joined together, and appear the ſame to every intelligent being that contemplates them.† They do not ſtand in need (I ſay) of

† See the firſt note to A. B. *King*'s Origin of Evil.

of an objective reality, or the exiſtence of any external things in full conformity to them, ſince we here conſider things no farther than as coming up to theſe original ſtandards, or as capable of being included in ſuch meaſures as are applied to determine their preciſe quantity, quality, &c. we are ranking them under a certain ſpecies or *ſort*, hence called their *eſſence*, which entitles them to the name deſcriptive of it, as is ſufficiently explained by Mr. *Locke*. They want therefore nothing more to eſtabliſh their reality, than to be conſiſtently put together, ſo as may diſtinguiſh them from others that are merely chimerical, and qualify them for the admiſſion of any real beings that may occur: Thus, not only the inſtance of a triangle ſo frequently uſed by Mr. *Locke*, but every theorem in *Euclid*, may be ranked among the abſtract conſiderations of quantity, apart from all real exiſtence, which ſeldom comes up to it: As it may be juſtly queſtioned whether any triangle or circle, as defined by him, ever exiſted in nature, *i. e.* exiſted ſo that all

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the lines of the triangle were right ones, or all the lines drawn from the centre equal. Theſe ideas *preſuppoſe* * no one Being in particular, they *imply* nothing more than a proper ſubject of enquiry (as was ſaid above) or ſome ſuch creature as is either actually endowed with, or at leaſt ſuſceptible of theſe ſpecifick qualities, or modes, which furniſh matter for the whole tribe of abſtractions daily made and preſerved by ſuch terms as uſually ſerve to denote them; whether appellatives, in order to diſtinguiſh men in their ſeveral ſtations and relations, private or public; to deſcribe their character or conduct, office, &c. as Parent, Patriot, King, &c. or ſuch more general, technical ones, as Paternity, Patriotiſm, Kingſhip, &c. the nature, end, and uſe, of all which abſtractions, with their names, are well enough underſtood, and would not eaſily be miſtaken in affairs of common life, which are happily leſs liable to ſuch kind of ſubtile refinements, as have brought metaphyſical ſpeculations into that con-

* Vide Bp. *Butler*'s Diſſ. on *Perſ. Identity*.

contempt under which they have long laboured. In ſhort, of theſe ſame abſtractions conſiſt all general terms and theorems of every ſcience; and the truth and certainty contained in them, when applied to morals or theology, is no leſs determinate than in other ſciences; it is equally capable of ſtrict demonſtration, and equally applicable to full as uſeful and important purpoſes: The great general truths, I ſay, ariſing out of theſe general eſſences, or *entities*, (as they are ſometimes called) are all clear, conſtant, and invariable in themſelves, though the names, in which ſuch a collection of ideas ſhould be preſerved, are often through the poverty and imperfection of language rendered extremely vague and uncertain in each writer or ſpeaker, and the ideas formed by them in other men's minds (which are their proper archetypes, and a conformity to which alone makes them *right* or *wrong*, truly or untruly applied) thereby become no leſs frequently confuſed and indeterminate. Thus, in the caſe before us, the word *perſon* is often uſed to ſignify the whole

whole aggregate of a rational Being, including both the very imperfect idea, if it be any idea at all, of *ſubſtance*, and its ſeveral properties, [as is the common way] or taking all the eſſential qualities together, [which properly conſtitute the ſubſtance of any thing*] with ſeveral of their modes. As when ſpeaking of any one, we include ſoul, body, ſtation, and other circumſtances, and accordingly ſtile him a wiſe, worthy perſon, a tall, comely, a rich, great one, &c. where *perſon* in a lax, popular ſenſe ſignifies as much as *man*. In which popular ſenſe Mr. *Locke* manifeſtly takes the word, when he ſays, it *ſtands for a thinking intelligent Being, that has reaſon and reflection, and can conſider itſelf as itſelf, the ſame thinking Being, in different times and places*. B. 2. C. 27. § 9. But when the term is uſed more accurately and philoſophically, it ſtands for one eſpecial property of that thing or Being, ſeparated from all the reſt that do or may attend it in real exiſtence,

 and

* See the firſt note to *King*, and the authors there cited.

and ſet apart for ranging ſuch Beings into diſtinct claſſes, (as hinted above) and conſidering them under diſtinct relations and connections, which are no leſs neceſſary to be determined in life, and which ſhould therefore have their proper and peculiar denomination. And thus ſameneſs of *perſon* ſtands to denote, not what conſtitutes the ſame *rational agent*, though it always is predicated of ſuch; but we conſider his rationality ſo far only, as it makes him capable of knowing what he does and ſuffers, and on what account, and thereby renders him amenable to juſtice for his behaviour, as above mentioned.

Whatever ingredients therefore of different kinds go to the compoſition, what other particulars, whether mental or corporeal, contribute to the formation of this intelligent Being, theſe make no part of our enquiry; which, I beg leave to repeat it again, is not what enters into the natural conſtitution of a thing, but what renders it ſo far a *moral* one, and is the *ſine quâ non* of its being juſtly chargeable with

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any of its paſt actions, here or hereafter: Or, in other words, it does not affect the reality or the permanency of ſuch intelligent Beings, but only regulates and retains thoſe Beings under ſuch a *moral* relation, as makes them properly accountable to ſome ſuperior for their courſe of action. It is an *artificial* diſtinction, yet founded in the nature, but not the *whole* nature of man, who muſt have many other eſſential powers and properties to ſubſiſt as man, and even to ſupport this in queſtion; but none other, we ſay, that can affect, or in any wiſe alter his condition in the above-named reſpect, and therefore none that come with propriety into the preſent conſideration.

This is all the myſtery of the matter, which has puzzled ſo many ingenious writers, and been ſo marvellouſly miſtaken by ſuch as are not ſufficiently acquainted with the doctrine of *abſtractions*, or are miſled by terms of art, inſtead of attending to the preciſe ideas which theſe ought to convey, and would always convey if they

were but carefully and ſteadily applied; for want of which proper application, men of genius and good ſenſe have fallen into ſuch egregious trifling,* as ſerves only to diſturb this

* An extraordinary inſtance of this kind is to be met with in Biſhop *Berkeley*, which he calls a *demonſtration* of the point; where the ſuppoſed union of A and C, not with the *whole* of B, but with ſome *different parts* of which B conſiſts, will hardly make them *one* with each other: —— But this famous demonſtration may be ranked among ſome others of the ſame ſort, and ſafely truſted with the reader. 'Let us ſuppoſe that a perſon hath ideas, 'and is conſcious during a certain ſpace of time, 'which we will divide into three equal parts, where-'of the latter terms are marked by the letters 'A, B, C. In the firſt part of time the perſon gets 'a certain number of ideas, which are retained in 'A: during the ſecond part of time he retains one 'half of his old ideas, and loſeth the other half, 'in place of which he acquires as many new ones: 'ſo that in B his ideas are half old and half new. 'And in the third part we ſuppoſe him to loſe the 'remainder of the ideas acquired in the firſt, and 'to get new ones in their ſtead, which are retained 'in C, together with thoſe acquired in the ſecond 'part of time. — The perſons in A and B are the 'ſame, being conſcious of common ideas by the 'ſuppoſition The perſon in B is (for the ſame 'reaſon) one and the ſame with the perſon in C. 'Therefore the perſon in A, is the ſame with the 'perſon in C, by that undoubted axiom, *quæ con-'veniunt uni tertio conveniunt inter ſe.* But the per-'ſon in C hath no idea in common with the perſon 'in A. Therefore perſonal identity doth not con-'ſiſt in conſciouſneſs.' *Alciphron*, v. 2. p. 160.

this beyond moſt other parts of ſcience, and has filled the above celebrated queſtion with a multitude of quibbles, which Mr. *Locke*'s clear and copious anſwers to his ſeveral opponents might, one would have hoped, have moſt effectually prevented, but which are ſubſiſting to this very day, to the no ſmall mortification of all ſincere lovers of truth, and admirers of that able defender of it. And I have been the larger on this head of general words and notions, which have ſo cloſe a connection with each other, and with the preſent queſtion, as the ſubject is not perhaps ſufficiently explained by Mr. *Locke* in any one place of his admirable Eſſay, though it occurs pretty often; and ſince the ſeveral properties or attributes of theſe ſame *abſtract ideas* are ſtill ſo miſerably miſunderſtood, as to have their very *exiſtence* diſputed, probably becauſe he has been pleaſed to ſet it forth in a manner ſomewhat paradoxical. Though this word *exiſtence* alſo is a term often miſapplied, as if nothing could really exiſt which was not an object of the ſenſes: Whereas in theſe,

and ſeveral other ideas, as has been often obſerved, their *eſſe* is *percipi*.

Again, We are often miſled on the other hand by imagining what things are *in themſelves* (as we uſually term it) or in their internal eſſences; inſtead of conſidering them as they *appear*, and ſtand related to *us*; or according to the *ideas* that are obviouſly ſuggeſted by them; which *ideas* only ſhould be the objects of our contemplation, (ſince we really perceive nothing elſe) and ought always to regulate our enquiry into things, as theſe are the ſole foundation of all our knowledge concerning them, of all that can with ſafety direct, or be of ſervice to us.

But to return to our author. That property then, or quality, or whatever he chuſes to call it, which, in his own words, renders men *ſenſible that they are the ſame* * in ſome reſpects, is in Mr. *Locke*'s ſenſe, in the legal, and in common ſenſe, that which ſo far makes them ſuch, or brings them into the ſame relative capacity of being ranked among moral, ſocial creatures, and of

* Eſſay, page 20.

of being treated accordingly for ſeveral obvious purpoſes in ſocial life. This conſciouſneſs, I ſay, of being thus far ourſelves, is what, in Mr. *Locke*'s language, *makes* us ſo. In this caſe, as in ſome other ideal objects, to *be*, and be *perceived*, is really the ſame, and what this author calls the *ſign** coincides with the thing *ſignified*. Whether any intelligent Being is at preſent what he is in every reſpect, wants no proof; of this he has ſelf evident intuitive knowledge,† and can go no higher. And whether he now is what he was once before, in this ſingle article of perſonality, can only be determined by his now being ſenſible of what he then thought and did, which is equally ſelf evident; and thus again, conſciouſneſs at the ſame time, and by the ſame means, that it convinces *him* of this, does likewiſe conſtitute him ſuch to all ends and purpoſes whatſoever.

Well then, having examined a little into the nature, and enumerated ſome few properties of an abſtract idea in general, and ſhewn

* Eſſay, p. 42. † See note 10. to *King*. Rem. a.

ſhewn that this particular one before us can be nothing more, we may find perhaps that however fluctuating and changeful ‡ this account may be judged to render perſonality; how much ſoever it may fall ſhort of ſome ſublime ſyſtems about purely immaterial ſubſtances, and perfectly independent principles of thought, yet there is no help for theſe changes in the ſeat of perſonality, ſince, in the laſt place, we know of nothing more ſtable and permanent in our conſtitution that has the leaſt pretence to ſettle and ſupport it. All parts of the *body* are to a certain degree in perpetual flux, nor is any one of them, that we are acquainted with, concerned in the preſent caſe more than another. As to the *mind*, both its cogitative and active powers are ſuſpended (whether they be ſo or not is a matter of *fact*, in which experience only, and not ſubtile argumentations drawn from the nature of an unknown, perhaps imaginary, eſſence ought to decide) during ſound ſleep; Nay, every drowſy nod (as Mr.

‡ Eſſay, p. 23.

Mr. *Locke* expreſſes it) muſt ſhake their doctrine, who maintain that theſe powers are inceſſantly employed. Call then a reſuſcitation or revival of theſe powers, when we awake, *another beginning of their exiſtence, a new creation*; and argue againſt the poſſibility of any ſuch *interruption* or *annihilation* of them, as long as you pleaſe, yet that it is matter of fact, and nightly experience, and capable of as good proof as a negative propoſition will admit, is made out ſufficiently by the abovenamed excellent writer. This, if properly attended to, and purſued through its genuine conſequences, would go a great way towards unfolding the true nature of the human mind, which many thoughtful men ſeem yet very little acquainted with, and very much afraid to examine.*

And

* Will not the leaſt hint of this doctrine, ſay they, give great offence, by appearing to undermine the ſettled diſtinction between *ſoul* and *body*, which is ſo much countenanced and confirmed in Scripture? —Does not it tend to diſturb common apprehenſions, and confound both the ſenſe and language of mankind?

Anſw. 1. If this doctrine be true, and a truth of ſome importance, it will ſurely ſtand the teſt, and

And while this diſpoſition holds, we can never expect to come at the original core of all thoſe corruptions that have infected this branch of philoſophy, and extended themſelves to ſome other parts of ſcience. Nor are the ſeveral proofs, or, if you pleaſe, pro-

ought to be ſupported, againſt all ſuch inconcluſive argumentations as are drawn from *conſequences* and common prejudices, and can only ſerve to obſtruct all kinds of improvement in any ſcience whatſoever.

Anſw. 2. The *two* great conſtituents of our frame frequently alluded to in Scripture, and to which [as to other popular notions and received forms of expreſſion] it uſually accommodates itſelf, are here no more confounded, than when St. *Paul* introduces a *third* as no leſs eſſential to the *whole* of our compoſition; *I pray God your whole ſpirit, and ſoul, and body, be preſerved blameleſs unto the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* 1 *Theſſ.* v. 23.

So far is either the true ſenſe of Scripture, or the real nature of things, from being confined to the logical arrangement of them under their eſtabliſhed genera or ſpecies; ſo little concerned either in our phyſical or metaphyſical diſtinctions of them, *v. g.* into animal and vegetable, material and immaterial, ſubſtance and property, &c. nor is its language more confounded, or its authority ſhaken, by ſuch a new ſyſtem of *Pneumaticks*, than it was by the late one of *Copernicus* concerning each of the planetary motions; which proved, that ſtrictly and philoſophically ſpeaking neither does the *ſun riſe*, nor the *earth ſtand upon pillars*, &c. or by *Newton*'s Principles of *Gravity* and a *Vacuum* (for which ſuppoſed inno-

probabilities, that I was not thinking all the laſt night, ſufficiently anſwered by the old excuſe that I may *forget* all ſuch thoughts immediately as ſoon as ever I awake: for ſetting aſide the great improbability of this happening ſo very conſtantly, for ſo long a time, it muſt appear to any one who underſtands what he ſays, that whoſoever, or whatſoever, was thus employed, it could not poſſibly be *I* who was all this while buſily engaged in ſuch thoughts, ſince they never bore the leaſt ſhare in my ſeries of conſciouſneſs, never were

innovations his *French* commentators think themſelves ſtill obliged to enter their caveat, and make apology to the church;) or *Locke*'s more hardy doctrine of *no innate Ideas:* all which were once equally dangerous and offenſive poſitions; but would ſuch ſurmiſes, as have been advanced about them, be admitted in any other caſe? would even a *Romiſh*, or any *other* Inquiſition now be found weak or wicked enough to proceed upon them? and if at laſt an Author ſhall incur the *Odium Theologicum*, and be traduced by the name of *Saducee*, *Socinian*, &c. for his innocent, as he thinks, perhaps laudable intentions;—if *offence* will be taken, as it often happens, where no juſt *cauſe* of offence is given; he muſt patiently ſubmit to his hard fate, and only beg leave to enquire whether there be not ſome room for ſuſpending our judgement a while, 'till it more fully appears where the fault of all this chiefly lies, and who is really anſwerable for it.

were connected with the chain of my waking thoughts, nor therefore could any more belong to *me*, than if you ſuppoſe them (as you might full as well, for argument's ſake, and to ſalve an hypotheſis) to be the working of ſome ſecret mechaniſm, or kept up in the watch that was lying by me. Something like this, I preſume, would be the plea, which all the advocates for this lame ſyſtem would offer in their own defence, were any one ſo injurious as to charge them with things done or ſaid in their ſleep. The ſame obſervation may be urged againſt that abſurd, ſelf repugnant hypotheſis of our having been in a *pre-exiſtent ſtate:* for whatſoever was done there, it can be nothing to *us*, who had never the leaſt notice or conception of it.

To the difficulties ſo often objected, of this being a *new creation*, † and making the ſame thing have *two beginnings of exiſtence*;* —We may obſerve, that it would indeed be an abſurdity to ſuppoſe two beginnings of exiſtence, if the identity of a ſubſtance, Being, or man were enquired into;

† Eſſay, p. 38. * Eſſay, p. 55.

into; but when the enquiry is made into the artificial abſtract idea of perſonality, invented for a particular end, to anſwer which conſciouſneſs only is required, beginning and end of exiſtence are quite out of the queſtion, being foreign to any conſideration of the ſubject.—It may be farther obſerved, that in fact we meet with ſomething of the ſame kind every morning after a total *interruption* of thought (and I hope, we may by this time in one ſenſe be allowed to term it ſo) during ſound ſleep: nay, if we ſearch the thing narrowly, and may in our turn enter into ſuch *minutiæ*, thus much will be implied in the *ſucceſſive* train of our ideas each hour of the day; that ſame article of *ſucceſſion* including ſome degree of diſtance between each of them, and conſequently at every ſucceſſive ſtep there is a new production, which may with equal reaſon be ſtiled an *interruption* of thought, or a new exertion of the thinking power.—But enough of theſe *nugæ difficiles*. Such changeable, frail creatures then are we through life, yet ſafe in the hand of that

unchangeably juſt, wiſe, good, and all-powerful Being, who perfectly underſtands our frame, and will make due allowances for each defect or diſorder incident to it; who at firſt created us out of nothing, and ſtill preſerves us through each ſhifting ſcene, be the revolutions in it never ſo frequent and *rapid*,* and will at length moſt aſſuredly conduct us to immortality. Though in every reſpect we are here *fleeing as it were a ſhadow, and never continue in one ſtay*, and at laſt ſuffer a ſhort ſeeming pauſe † in our exiſtence, which is in Scripture termed the *ſleep of death*; yet will he again raiſe us *out of the duſt*; reſtore us to ourſelves, and to our *Friends*;

* Eſſay, p. 23.

† *i. e.* a pauſe in the opinion and ſight of other ſentient Beings exiſting after our departure, but not a pauſe ſtrictly ſo called to the perſon himſelf, in which there will be an unbroken thread of conſciouſneſs or continued perſonality; time unperceived being no time, *time abſolute* a fiction, and no new idea intervening between the moments of his falling aſleep and waking again, theſe will be to him coincident: which ſhews, that perſonality cannot have two beginnings of exiſtence, though the ſubſtance in which it is found may be perpetually varied, and though ſometimes a greater, and ſometimes a leſs number of facts riſe up to his remembrance.

Friends; ‡ revive our conſciouſneſs of each paſt act or habit, that may prove of the leaſt moral import; cauſe the *ſecrets of all hearts to be laid open*, and either reward or puniſh every one according to his *works done in the body*.

Nor does it imply a *plurality of perſons* in any man at any given time to charge him with various actions or omiſſions; ſince he may become guilty of a plurality of crimes, as often as he is induced or enabled to reflect upon them, though theſe cannot be crowded into his mind all together, any more than they could have been ſo committed. Nor therefore need all paſt actions be-

‡ To one who has not ſeen and felt the unhappy effects of human prejudice and partial judgement in ſuch caſes, it might appear ſtrange that ſo many wiſe and able men ſhould ſtill continue *ignorant* of this, after all the fulleſt information given us in the following expreſs declaration of that great and good Apoſtle St. *Paul:* I WOULD NOT HAVE YOU TO BE IGNORANT, BRETHREN, CONCERNING THEM WHICH ARE ASLEEP, THAT YE SORROW NOT EVEN AS OTHERS WHICH HAVE NO HOPE. FOR IF WE BELIEVE THAT JESUS DIED AND ROSE AGAIN, EVEN SO THEM ALSO WHICH SLEEP IN JESUS, WILL GOD BRING WITH HIM. — WHEREFORE COMFORT ONE ANOTHER WITH THESE WORDS. 1 *Theſſ.* iv. 13, &c.

become *at once preſent* † to the mind; which is utterly inconſiſtent with our frame, as it now ſtands, and perhaps with that of every other created Being: nor is there a neceſſity for any one idea being *always* actually in view; § which is equally ſo; but only for a capacity of having ſuch brought to mind again, together with a conſciouſneſs of their having been there before, (which diſtinguiſhes them from entirely new ones,) or a poſſibility of recognizing them upon occaſion, at leaſt whenever we are to account for them, as has been frequently obſerved. So far as any ſuch recognition reaches, ſuch perſon is the ſame; when this faculty varies, that muſt vary alſo; and he become the ſame, or not, at different times and in divers reſpects, as obſerved likewiſe; at leaſt his accountableneſs muſt vary in proportion, call this perſonality, or what you think fit. Nor does it properly lie in a *power of cauſing* a return of the ſame idea;* but rather in the *capacity of receiving* it, of readmitting the ſame conſciouſneſs concerning any paſt thought,

† Eſſay, p. 40. § Eſſay, p. 24. * Eſſay, p. 31.

thought, action, or perception. Nor is it merely a *preſent repreſentation* † of any ſuch act; but a repreſentation of it as *our own*, which entitles us to it; one perſon may know or become conſcious of the *deeds of another*, but this is not knowing that he *himſelf was the author* of thoſe deeds, which is a contradiction; and to treat him as ſuch upon that account only, would be inverting all rules of right and wrong; and could not therefore be practiſed by either God or Man, ſince no end could poſſibly be anſwered by ſuch treatment, as obſerved above.

To dwell upon thoſe ſurpriſing conſequences that might attend the transferring the ſame conſciouſneſs to different Beings, or giving the ſame Being very different ones, is merely puzzling and perplexing the point, by introducing ſuch confuſions as never really exiſted, and would not alter the true ſtate of the queſtion, if they did.

Such *Fairy* tales and *Arabian* transformations, poſſible or impoſſible, can only ſerve to amuſe the fancy, without any ſolid information to the judgement. Theſe flights

† Eſſay, p. 33,

flights of mere imagination Mr. *Locke* generally avoids, though he was here tempted to indulge a few ſuch, in playing with the wild ſuppoſitions of his adverſaries, [*v. g.* a change of ſouls between *Socrates* and the mayor of *Queenborough*, &c.] probably to enliven a dry ſubject, and render it more palatable to the bulk of his readers.

Nor are thoſe caſes of a diſordered imagination in lunacy, or vapours, where perſons are for a time *beſide themſelves* (as we uſually term it) and may believe ſuch chimerical alterations to befal them, any more to the purpoſe.

But it were endleſs to unravel all the futile ſophiſms and falſe ſuppoſitions, that have been introduced into the preſent queſtion; I have endeavoured to obviate ſuch as appeared moſt material, and account for them; and at the ſame time to inculcate a doctrine, which, though common enough, ſeemed not enough attended to; yet is fundamentally requiſite to a right underſtanding of this intricate ſubject. And if that which is laid down above be a true ſtate of the caſe, all the reſt of our Author's plan, [of placing perſonal

ſonal identity in a continuation of thought*] will drop of courſe. I truſt the Reader will make allowance for ſome repetitions, which were left to render things as plain as poſſible, and prevent future ſubterfuges of the like kind; and if the ſubſtance of theſe few haſty Obſervations on the firſt part of this ingenious writer's *Eſſay*, prove in the leaſt degree ſatisfactory to himſelf, or have a tendency to enlarge general knowledge, and guard againſt popular errors, I muſt rely upon his candour for excuſing the manner in which they are thrown out; and ſhall take the liberty of cloſing them in the form of a Syllogiſm, which is ſubmitted to his conſideration:

Quo poſito ponitur perſonæ identitas, et quo ſublato tollitur, id perſonalem identitatem conſtituit:

Sed poſitâ conſcientiâ, &c.

Ergo.

* Which diſpoſition, could it be made out, would never anſwer the intent of ſociety, or help to direct us in our duty, the two grand objects which firſt gave birth to perſonality; *i. e.* to a very partial confined conſideration of that complex idea, Subſtance, or Being called Man.

APPENDIX.

A friend, well acquainted with the ſubject of the foregoing ſheets, having communicated to me ſome obſervations concerning the uſe of the word Perſon, *which came too late to be inſerted in their proper place, I muſt take the liberty of annexing them, though they occaſion ſome more redundancies and repetitions, in order to throw as much light as is poſſible on this very obſcure and long controverted queſtion.*

AS Mr. *Locke*'s definition of the term *Perſon*, (Chap. xxvii. § 9.) may poſſibly create ſome difficulty, it will be proper to examine into the ſenſe which ſhould be put upon this word, whenever we enquire after the identity of any *man's perſon*; which may perhaps at once lead us to a juſt conception of the whole. In the afore-mentioned ſection, Mr. *Locke* ſays, that *Perſon* ſtands for *a thinking intelligent Being, that has*

has reaſon and reflection, &c. whereas I ſhould imagine, the expreſſion would have been more juſt, had he ſaid that the word perſon ſtands for an attribute, or quality, or character of a thinking intelligent Being; in the ſame ſenſe as *Tully* uſes it, *Orat.* pro *Syll.* § 3. "*Hanc mihi tu ſi, propter res meas geſtas, imponis in omni vitâ meâ* perſonam, *Torquate, vehementer erras. Me natura miſericordem, patria ſeverum; crudelem nec patria, nec natura eſſe voluit: denique iſtam ipſam* perſonam *vehementem et acrem, quam mihi tum tempus et reſpublica impoſuit, jam voluntas et natura ipſa detraxit.* It came at laſt to be confounded with, and ſtand for *homo gerens perſonam, (Taylor*, Civ. L. p. 247, 248.) and in this ſenſe *Locke* has incautiouſly defined the word. It is attributed alſo to more intelligent Beings than one; as by the *Jeſuits* in their declaration prefixed to the third Book of *Newton*, *alienam coacti ſumus gerere perſonam.* The word perſon then, according to the received ſenſe in all claſſical authors, ſtanding for a certain guiſe, character, quality, *i. e.* being in fact a mixed mode, or relation,

and

and not a ſubſtance; we muſt next enquire, what *particular* character or quality it ſtands for in this place, as the ſame man may bear many characters and relations at the ſame, or different times. The anſwer is, that here it ſtands for that particular quality or character, under which a man is conſidered, when he is treated as an intelligent Being ſubject to government and laws, and accountable for his actions: *i. e.* not the man himſelf, but an abſtract conſideration of him, for ſuch and ſuch particular ends: and to enquire after its identity, is to enquire, not after the identity of a conſcious Being, but after the identity of a quality or attribute of ſuch a conſcious Being. All difficulties that relate to a man's *forgetting* ſome actions, &c. now vaniſh, when perſon is conſidered as a character, and not a ſubſtance, or confounded with *homo gerens perſonam:* and it amounts to no more than ſaying, a man puts on a maſk — continues to wear it for ſome time — puts off one maſk and takes another, *i. e.* appears to have conſciouſneſs — to recollect paſt con-

ſciouſ-

ſciouſneſſes — does not recollect them, &c. The impropriety conſiſts in ſaying, a *man is* the ſame *perſon* with him who did ſuch a fact; which is the ſame as to ſay, a man is blackneſs, guilt, &c. *i. e.* a mixed mode is predicated of a ſubſtance; whereas it ought to be in ſtrict propriety of ſpeech, the perſon of the man who did ſuch a fact, is the ſame with the perſon of him, who now ſtands before us; or, in plainer terms, the man who now ſtands before the court is conſcious of the former facts, and is therefore the proper object of puniſhment. It may be obſerved, that the word perſonality is really an abſurd expreſſion: ſince perſon itſelf ſtands for the mixed mode or quality; — and perſonality therefore may be ranked among the old ſcholaſtick terms of corporeity, egoity, tableity, &c. or is even yet more harſh; as mixed modes, ſuch as gratitude, murder, and therefore perſon, cannot be thus re-modified without peculiar abſurdity.

THE END.

ERRATUM.

P. 17. l. 2. after *centre*, add *to the circumference*.

P. 28. n. l. 22. for *Pneumaticks*, read *Pneumatology*.

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